

## Grace Creek (0505B) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on Grace Creek (0505B) in the summer of 2010 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. Grace Creek is an unclassified perennial water body running through Gregg County. The creek is approximately 12 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2014 Texas 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies due to elevated bacteria levels. It was initially listed in 2000.

The RUAA identified evidence indicating the designated use of primary contact recreation (PCR) should be revised to secondary contact recreation 1 (SCR 1). SCR applies to water bodies where water recreation can occur, but the nature of the recreation does not involve a significant risk of ingestion. SCR 1 applies to intermittent and perennial freshwaters where site-specific information demonstrates that primary contact recreation has little to no likelihood of occurring due to physical characteristics of the water body such as shallow depths or lack of pools.

During the surveys, field staff did not observe any primary contact recreation. One interview referenced children wading and there was an inner tube found at one site. No secondary contact recreation was observed during the surveys, but seasonal fishing was reported in interviews. Fishing gear and fish bones were found at several sites. Bicycling was observed by surveyors and reported in interviews. Several homeless encampments were observed along the creek near bridge crossings. Although some sites had steep, unvegetated banks, there are several access points that facilitate recreation through parks, lawns, and a hike and bike trail. Grace Creek had an average thalweg depth of 0.53 m (20.9 in) and two pools deeper than one meter.

The results of the RUAA study on Grace Creek indicate that primary contact recreation occurs very rarely and that fishing is a more common activity. The Sabine River Authority of Texas commented that no primary contact recreation or evidence was observed during site reconnaissance surveys or monthly flow monitoring (33 cumulative months of monitoring). Additionally, the City of Longview does not permit swimming, bathing, or wading in waters that are not provided for that purpose (see Ord. No. 745, § 5, 6-9-70; Ord. No. 2522, § 1, 12-14-95<sup>1</sup>).

In accordance with §307.4 (j)(3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ recommends a reclassification from PCR to SCR1 with the corresponding geometric mean of 630 colonies *E. coli*/100mL for all of Grace Creek, from the confluence of the Sabine River to the FM 1844 in Gregg County. This reclassification is appropriate due to “natural, ephemeral, intermittent low flow conditions or water levels” in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(2).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of Grace Creek in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ would provide additional public notice and opportunity for public comment. In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would review this proposed change under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act.

<sup>1</sup>[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Texas/longviewtx/cityoflongviewtexascodeofordinances?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:longview\\_tx](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/Texas/longviewtx/cityoflongviewtexascodeofordinances?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:longview_tx)